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09/608,773

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12/17/2004

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EXAMINER

ODLAND, DAVID E

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2662

DATE MAILED: 12/17/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/608,773

Applicant(s)

DYRGA ET AL.

Examiner

David Odland

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 November 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. The following is a response to the amendments filed on 11/01/2004.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1,3,4,6-10 and 12-14 and 16-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ganmukhi et al. (USPN 5,953,314), hereafter referred to as Ganmukhi, in view of Kinoshita (USPN 5,802,047), hereafter referred to as Kinoshita, and further in view of Ofek (USPN 6442135), hereafter referred to as Ofek and further in view of Nolan et al. (USPN 6,661,790), hereafter referred to as Nolan.

Referring to claims 1, 12 and 18, Ganmukhi discloses an apparatus comprising:

a first interface comprising a plurality of physical communication ports to transmit data to and receive data from a plurality of network devices (a switch comprising an interface comprising a first interface comprising a plurality of ports (see the left hand side of the switch in figure 1));

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a first control unit communicatively coupled to the first interface to process at least a first subset of the data (a first control processor coupled to the first interface to process data (see figure 1 and columns 1 and 2));

a second control unit communicatively coupled to the first interface and the first control unit to process at least a second subset of the data (a second control processor coupled to the first interface and first control processor to process data (see figure 1 and columns 1 and 2));

a second interface communicatively coupled between the first interface and the first and second control units (a second interface coupled to the first interface and the two control processors (see figure 1 and columns 1 and 2)) such that either one of the first and second control units may communicate with any of the plurality of network devices if the other of the first and second control units fails (if one control processor fails the other control processor will commence control processing of data from network devices coupled to both interfaces (see figure 1 and abstract and columns 1 and 2)). Ganmukhi does not disclose a logical network interface to provide multiple logical communication ports that are coupled to the physical ports of the first interface. However, Kinoshita discloses a system wherein physical ports of the router has associated logic ports (see figure 9, column 2 lines 31-50 and column 5 lines 6-11 and claim 1)). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to have the interfaces of Ganmukhi comprise a plurality of logical ports as discloses in Kinoshita because, as Kinoshita points out in column 2 lines 26-43, doing so would allow the interfaces to communicate with an increased number of other network nodes without having to increase the number of physical ports.

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Furthermore Ganmukhi does not disclose that the logical interface gives the control units the ability to simultaneously address each of the physical ports. However, Ofek discloses a system wherein a switch is given the ability to multicast packets to output its ports simultaneously (see column 10 line 56 through column 11 line 15)). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to implement this feature in Ganmukhi because transmitting packets simultaneously is faster than transmitting packets one-by-one, thereby making the Ganmukhi system operate quicker.

Lastly, Ganmukhi does not disclose transmitting the packet to multiple ports when the look up is unsuccessful. However, Nolan discloses a system wherein when a packet is received a look up is performed to determine the port it should be sent to and when the look up fails the packet is broadcast to all ports (see column 1 lines 30-40)). it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to implement this feature into the system of Ganmukhi because doing so would ensure the packet is received by its destination since it is broadcast to all ports, thereby making the system more reliable.

Note regarding claim 18, Ganmukhi does not disclose that the method discussed above is performed using a storage medium in conjunction with a plurality of executable instructions (i.e. software based implementation). However, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to implement the Ganmukhi system in this manner because the developmental costs of a software implementation are less than that of a hardware based implementation. Furthermore, software is easier to upgrade than hardware.

Referring to claim 3, Ganmukhi discloses the system discussed above. Ganmukhi does not disclose that the first interface comprises two logical communication ports for each one of

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the plurality of physical communication ports. However, Kinoshita discloses a system wherein each physical port has associated with it a plurality of logical ports (see figure 9, column 2 lines 31-50, column 5 lines 6-11 and claim 1)). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to have the first interface of Ganmukhi comprise two logical ports as discloses in Kinoshita because, as Kinoshita points out in column 2 lines 26-43, doing so would allow the interface to communicate with an increased number of other network nodes rather than just one other node without having to increase the number of physical ports.

Referring to claim 4, Ganmukhi discloses the system discussed above. Furthermore, Ganmukhi discloses each of the first and second control units further comprises:

a memory device to store one or more data transmission protocols (the control processors have memory and control the operations of multiple protocols such as ATM and Ethernet (see figure 2 and column 2)); and

a processor coupled to the memory device to process network data based at least in part upon the one or more data transmission protocols (the control processor comprises an ATM processor (see figure 2)).

Referring to claim 6, Ganmukhi discloses the system discussed above. Furthermore, Ganmukhi discloses that the system further comprises a non-volatile memory device coupled to the first and second control units to store configuration data for use by the first and second control units (each processor comprise non-volatile storage wherein it stores stat information (see column 4 lines 8-20)).

Referring to claim 7, Ganmukhi discloses the system discussed above. Furthermore Ganmukhi discloses that the system comprises a chassis (the apparatus comprises a chassis

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containing cards (see figure 1 and column 2 lines 39-42)) and at least one of the first and second control units is embodied within a second blade secured within the chassis (each control processor is embedded within a card that is inserted into a chassis (see figure 1 and column 2 lines 48-42)). Ganmukhi does not disclose that the non-volatile memory device is embodied within a first blade secured within the chassis. Rather Ganmukhi discloses that the non-volatile memory is incorporated within the control processors themselves (see figure 2 and column 4 lines 8-20)). However, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to implement the non-volatile memory as a separate blade secured within the chassis because doing so would allow such memory to be easily replaced if it becomes inoperable whereas in Ganmukhi if the non-volatile memory becomes inoperable the entire control processor would have to be replaced, which would be more costly. Furthermore, implementing the non-volatile memory on a separate blade would allow a user of the system to use which ever type of non-volatile memory he or she wishes (i.e. different brands, RAM, flash PROM, ect...) thereby making the system of Ganmukhi more flexible.

Referring to claim 8, Ganmukhi discloses the system discussed above. Ganmukhi does not disclose that the first and second interfaces are embodied within an ASIC. However, ASIC devices are highly specialized processing circuit that are used to consolidate the operation normally performed by many chips into a single package, thereby decreasing board size (or the amount of space taken up by chips on a board) and power consumption. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to embody the interfaces of Ganmukhi within an ASIC because doing so would decrease board size required by the interfaces and reduce the power consumption by the interfaces.

Referring to claims 9, Ganmukhi discloses the system discussed above. Furthermore, Ganmukhi discloses that the first control unit is associated with a first network address and the second control unit is associated with a second network address (each of the control processors are implemented on separate cards that are inserted into a card cage and communicate over busses and back channels, therefore inherently there must be addresses associated with these cards in order for data to be sent to the active control processor (see figure 1 and columns 2,4 and 5)).

Referring to claim 10, Ganmukhi discloses the system discussed above. Furthermore, Ganmukhi discloses that the first and second control units each independently maintain network status information (each control processor has exclusive control over central resources and internal resources such as the Management Ethernet port, buses and alarm signals (see column 3 lines 13-36)).

Referring to claims 13 and 19, Ganmukhi discloses the system discussed above. Ganmukhi does not disclose maintaining by the first control unit, first address data corresponding to the plurality of external devices; and maintaining by the second control unit, second address data corresponding to the plurality of external devices. However, Kinoshita discloses a switching system wherein a plurality of logical ports is associated with each of a plurality of physical ports, wherein the logical ports are grouped together according to a virtual-LAN configuration and the switching/routing system maintains addresses associated with the groupings (see columns 2-4). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to have the control processors of Ganmukhi each maintain the address of a plurality of external devices, as taught in Kinoshita, as Kinoshita points out in column 2 lines 26-43,

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doing so would allow the interfaces to communicate with an increased number of other network nodes without having to increase the number of physical ports.

Referring to claim 14, Ganmukhi discloses the system discussed above. Furthermore, Ganmukhi discloses that the first control unit maintains the first address data and the second control unit maintains the second address data each according to at least one of a plurality of routing protocols (the control processors have memory and control the operations of multiple protocols such as ATM and Ethernet and therefore each inherently maintains addresses of nodes it needs to communicate with (see figure 2 and column 2)).

Referring to claim 16, Ganmukhi discloses the system discussed above. Furthermore, Ganmukhi discloses that the first control unit is associated with a first network address and the second control unit is associated with a second network address (each of the control processors are implemented on separate cards that are inserted into a card cage and communicate over busses and back channels, therefore inherently there must be addresses associated with these cards in order for data to be sent to the active control processor (see figure 1 and columns 2,4 and 5)).

Referring to claim 17, Ganmukhi discloses the system discussed above. Ganmukhi does not disclose that the second network address is derived from the first network address. However, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to derive the first address from the second address, because doing so is merely a matter of design choice.

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4. Claims 5 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ganmukhi in view of Kinoshita, Ofek and Nolan and further in view of Tappan (USPN 6,473,421), hereafter referred to as Tappan.

Referring to claims 5 and 15, Ganmukhi discloses the system discussed above. Ganmukhi does not disclose that the one or more data transmission protocols include OSPF. However, Tappan discloses a switching system that uses OSPF for routing packets (see abstract). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to implement this type of routing in Ganmukhi because as Tappan points out OSPF is used by nodes for exchanging topological information with other nodes (see column 4 lines 51-67)). Therefore, this implementation would make Ganmukhi more reliable, versatile and flexible.

5. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ganmukhi in view of Kinoshita, Ofek and Nolan and further in view of Michelson (USPN 5481673), hereafter referred to as Michelson.

Referring to claim 11, Ganmukhi discloses the system discussed above. Ganmukhi does not disclose that the network status information is maintained in a routing table. However, Michelson discloses a switching system wherein status information, such as the availability or unavailability of particular routes, is stored in routing tables (see claim 1 and column 4 lines 38-43). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to store status information in routing tables in the system of Ganmukhi, as taught in the system of Michelson, because doing so would allow the switching process of Ganmukhi to be performed in a more time-efficient manner. Namely, knowing the availability and unavailability of the links

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in Ganmukhi would help save processing time since routes that are not available would not be considered as possible data paths by the switch. Furthermore, the use of a routing table allows for a quick reference the switch can use to determine data paths and storing the status information in such a table will allow the switch to access the status of the determined paths all in one place (i.e. the routing table) rather than having to go to separate memories to gather such information, thereby further making the switching process of Ganmukhi more time-efficient.

6. Claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ganmukhi in view Kinoshita, Ofek and Nolan and further in view of Laor (USPN 6,147,996), hereafter referred to as Laor.

Referring to claim 20, Ganmukhi discloses the system discussed above. Ganmukhi does not disclose that the system performs layer 2 and/or layer 3 switching. However, Laor discloses of a switching system that performs layer 2 and layer 3 switching (see abstract and column 1 lines 46-52). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to implement level 2 and 3 switching in the system of Ganmukhi because doing so would allow the switch to perform more operations such as processing packets independently and asynchronously and the reordering of packets into their proper order, as pointed out in Laor in column 1 lines 55-59, thereby making the system of Ganmukhi more versatile.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1,12 and 18 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

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Conclusion

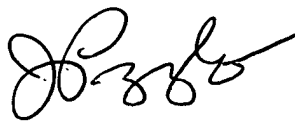
8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David Odland whose telephone number is (571) 272-3096. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday from 8am to 5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hassan Kizou, can be reached at (571) 272-3088. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

deo

December 4, 2004


JOHN PEZZULLO
PRIMARY EXAMINER